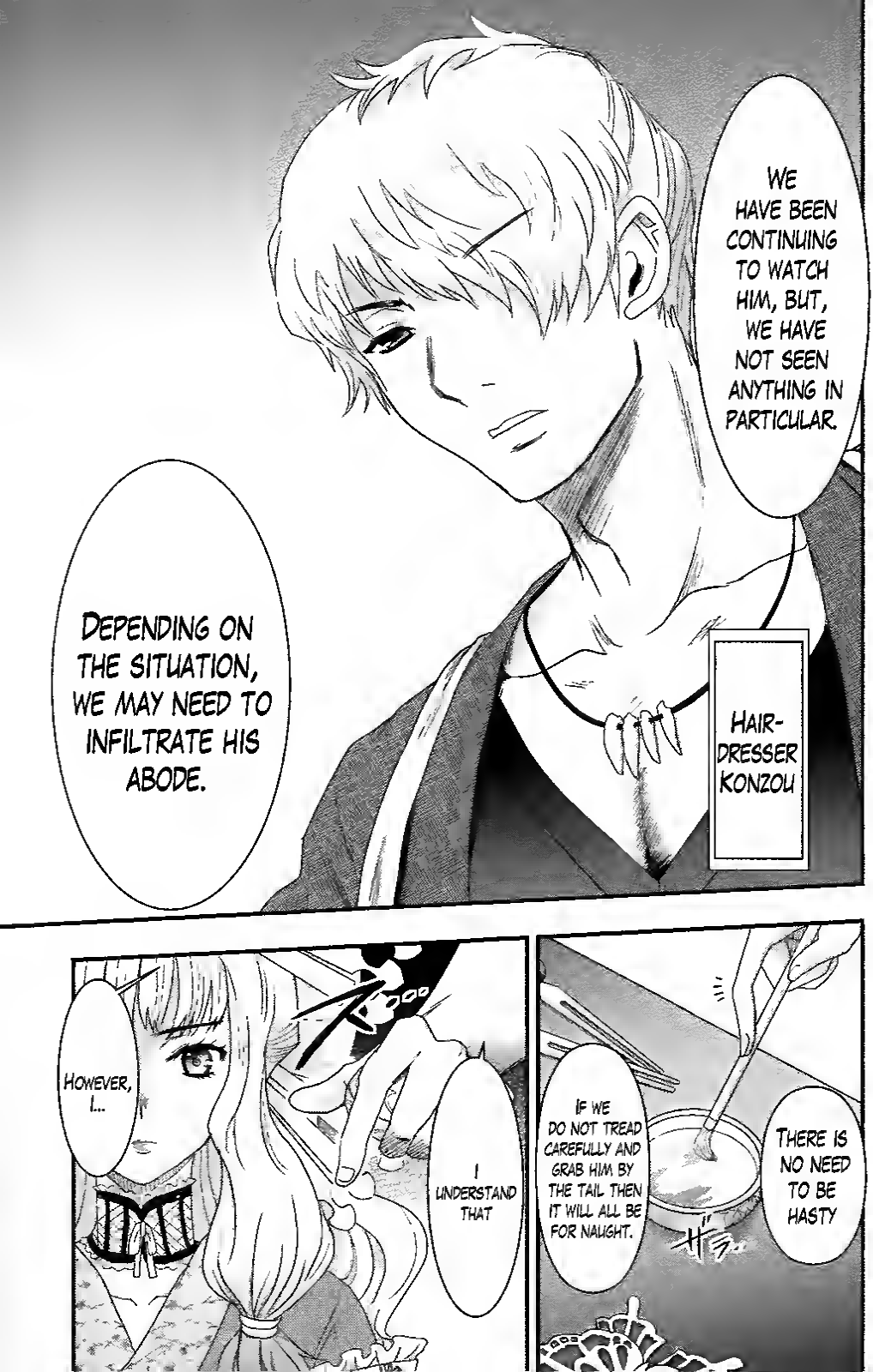
Chapter 4 The Chick Hears the Caged Bird's Song (Part 4)

Edo
Yoshiwara
Kaikarou
HEEEY
IS KONZOU THE HAIRDRESSER STILL WITH FUYOU?
I'M GETTING TIRED OF WAITING
THAT MAY BE SO, BUT, ISN'T IT TAKING TOO LONG?
WAKAUME-CHAN
THERE IS NOTHING THAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT. IT'S BEEN DECIDED THAT THE HIGHER RANKING PROSTITUTES WOULD GET THEIR HAIR DONE FIRST

I WONDER IF THE RUMOR ABOUT KONZOU-SAN
BEING FUYOU'S LOVER IS TRUE
KE KE KE KE
SHALL I TELL OKIKU ABOUT THIS AND HAVE HER SENT TO THE DARK ROOM?
SHE WILL BE SURE TO GET BEATEN
AND DOUSED
AH... WAKAME-CHAN, YOU MUSTN'T SPEAK OF SUCH THING...
IF ANYTHING, KONZOU-SAN IS THE BEST AT HAIRDRESSING!
THAT'S RIGHT! EVEN I HAVE A LOVER WHO I WANT TO COMB ME WITH THIS COMB HE GAVE ME!!
KAEDE?!
HE IS THE MAN I WOULD MOST WANT TO MAKE LOVE TO ME ON THE SIDE!!
THE WAY HE USES HIS HANDS IS JUST SO SEXY
JUST SEEING HIM IN THE MIRROR IS ENOUGH TO MAKE ME MELT AT MY VERY CORE...
AAHN♡ HEEEY!! YOU'RE BEING UNSEEMLY!

ニャッ…
ニャッ…
ニャッ…
ニャッ…
ニャッ…
ニャッ…
ニャッ…
HAS HE
MADE ANY MOVEMENTS LATELY?
ニャッ…


We have been continuing to watch him, but, we have not seen anything in particular.
Depending on the situation, we may need to infiltrate his abode.
Hair-dresser Konzou
There is no need to be hasty
If we do not tread carefully and grab him by the tail then it will all be for naught.
I understand that
However, I...

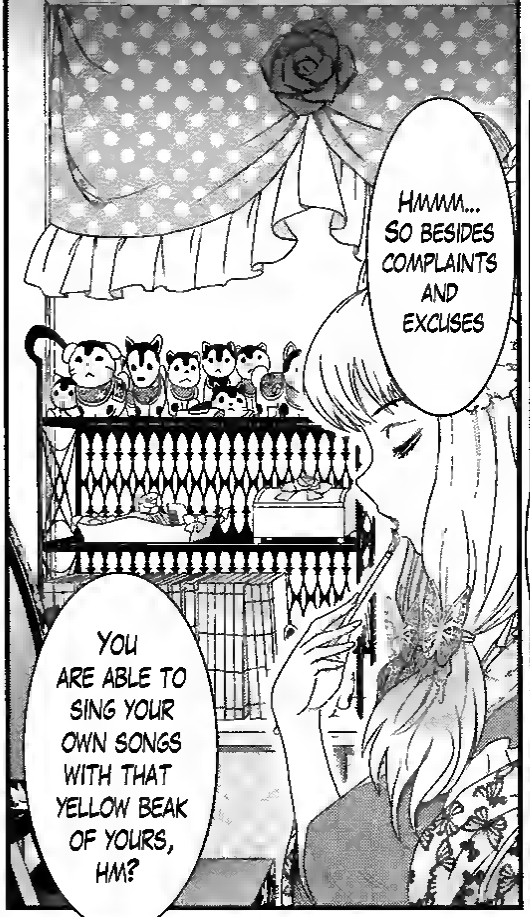
I AM WORRIED
IF YOUR FATHER
SAW YOU AS YOU ARE NOW...
I...

I CAME HERE WITH THE INTENTION OF PURSUING HIM.
THIS HAIR AND ROUGE ON MY LIPS IS FOR THAT PURPOSE AS WELL
SO THERE IS NOTHING FOR ME TO FEEL ASHAMED ABOUT.
OF COURSE. I AM AWARE OF THAT
HOWEVER... THERE HAVE BEEN RUMORS GOING AROUND EDO ABOUT A "MYSTERY SOLVING OIRAN IN KAIKAROU".
THINGS MAY BE GOING WELL FOR THE TIME BEING, BUT
SHOULD YOU, "FUYOU," EVER COME ACROSS A MYSTERY YOU CANNOT SOLVE...
.....?

WHAT THEN?
ドドド
ガラ
OIRAN!! I FIGURED IT OUT!
WHAT'S WITH THIS MOOD?
…?
タタタ
…!

WELCOME BACK, IKUTAROU-SAN!
HOGEHH!!!
SO, SO, WHAT DID YOU FIGURE OUT?
AH... KONZOU-SAMA!
KONZOU?
I WILL... TAKE MY LEAVE
I DID AS YOU SAID
AND PUT ON TOWAZOU-SAN'S OUTFIT AND WENT INTO THE POND ON STAGE

IT'S SAWDUST
NOTHING HAPPENED, BUT I FOUND THIS ON ONE OF THE BOULDERS THEY HAD ON STAGE
I'M SURE THAT SOMEONE PUT SOME ICE IN THE POND
I THINK IT WAS SOMETHING THAT WAS ATTACHED TO THE ICE THEY PUT IN.
I THINK IT HAPPENED WHEN SOMEONE PUT ICE IN THE POND.
IF THAT ICE HAD POISON IN IT...
DO YOU THINK IT MIGHT HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH TOWAZOU-SAN'S DEATH?


HMMM... SO BESIDES COMPLAINTS AND EXCUSES
YOU ARE ABLE TO SING YOUR OWN SONGS WITH THAT YELLOW BEAK OF YOURS, HM?

YOU'RE AMAZING, IKUTAROU-SAN!
KEEP GOING! DON'T STOP!

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?
KEEP GOING!

FINE! BEING UP ON YOUR HIGH PERCH, I'LL DEFINITELY BE ABLE TO FIND THE TRUTH FASTER THAN YOU!!

ガチョーン...
!
WHAT KIND OF REACTION IS THAT?!
DOES SHE NOT LIKE THAT I CAME UP WITH A REASONABLE DEDUCTION?!

Then, just how did she ...
Put the ice in the pond without drawing suspicion to herself?
Because there were always stagehands around the pond
I think it would have been impossible for Otose-san to put the ice in
Yeah... But
In regards to the ice. If I am not mistaken, a person by the name of Otose supplied them, correct?
Yeah, there was an afternoon performance and a rehearsal so two other people went into the pond ...
On the day of Towazou's death, there were others who went into the pond as well, weren't there?
Not feel well... Hm
During the rehearsal, Towazou's attendant, Koroku-san, took his place and seemed to not feel well while he was in the pond.
Oh right

I WONDER IF IT HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE POISON IN THE ICE
BUT, THEN AGAIN, HE SURVIVED IN THE END, RIGHT?
EVEN IF THE ICE WAS MELTING IT WOULD TAKE TIME FOR IT TO DO SO.
IF THERE WAS POISON IN THE ICE THEN IT SHOULD HAVE ONLY BEEN RELEASING IT A BIT AT A TIME.
THAT'S WHY KOROKU IS ALIVE AND TOWAZOU IS DEAD.
AND IF THAT'S SO, THEN THE ONE WHO PUT THE ICE IN THE POND WAS THE ONE WHO WENT IN BEFORE THE OTHER TWO ...
WHICH MEANS THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN HOURAI-SAN!
BUT, WOULD SOMEONE AS DEVOTED TO THE ARTS AS HIM DO SUCH A THING?
THAT'S EXACTLY WHY HE DID IT

But, if that is so, then how were they able to get the ice in the pond?
Otose-san is a big patron and, since he is close with her, it would not have been weird if she helped him out.
And yet, because he was the son of the previous generation, he was going to succeed as head of the troupe.
Towazou-san hated rehearsing and did nothing but mess around...
There... There has to be a way...
After seeing all I had for myself I should be able to find how it was done...
Something like that would have been unforgivable to Hourai-san.
That would lead me to the truth faster than the Oiran!
But where?! After everything I saw there has to be something...
The outfit!
That's right!

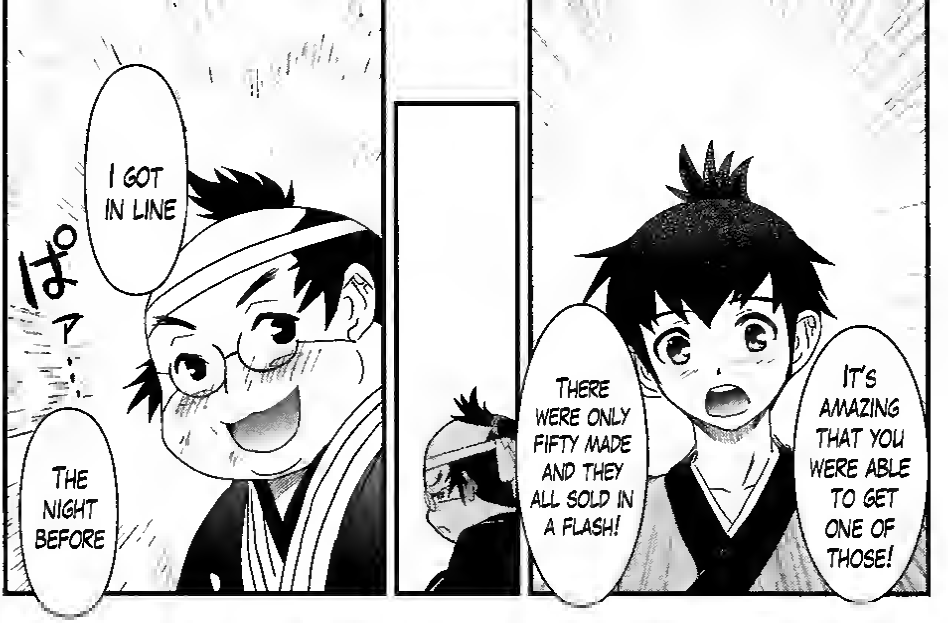
THAT'S AMAZING! ISN'T IT, NEE-SAMA ?!
IT'S DECIDED! THE CULPRITS WERE HOURAI-SAN AND OTOSE-SAN!
HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO DO THAT WITH THAT OUTFIT!
IF HE BROKE UP THE BLOCK ICE AND HID THEM IN HIS SLEEVES AND POCKETS THEN HE WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SNEAK THE ICE IN WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICING ...
HM, I WONDER ABOUT THAT
EH?
A MASK?
IKUTAROU, ARE YOU
TRULY ALL RIGHT WITH THAT ANSWER?

NOT EVERYTHING IS LIMITED BY WHAT YOU SEE WITH YOUR EYES.
IF THERE IS A FRONT THEN THERE IS SURE TO BE A BACK...
JUST WHAT IS SHE SAYING ?!
ANYWAY, I'M GOING TO THE GUARD HOUSE* AND TELL THEM WHAT I JUST TOLD YOU!
IT WOULD BE BAD IF THE CULPRITS GOT AWAY!
AH...
I WILL GO AS WELL!
ぴしゃん...

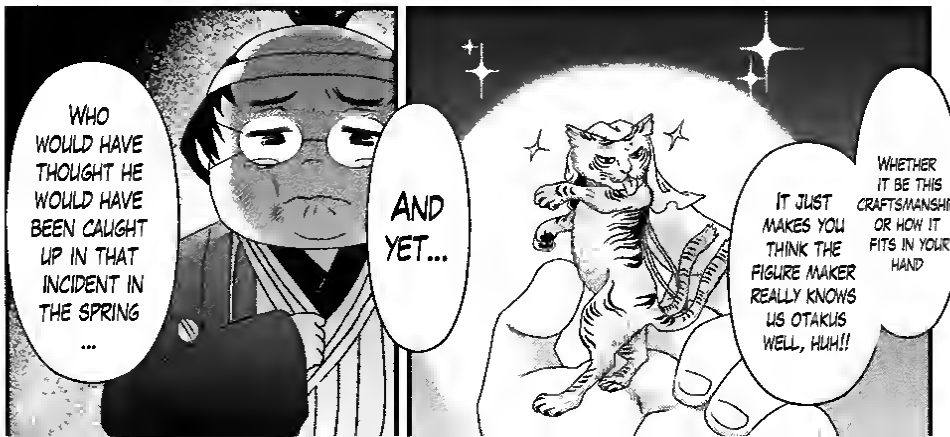
Guard House
……
WHAT IS THE MATTER, IKUTAROU-SAN?
YOU'RE NOT GOING IN?
NO, I WILL... I WILL GO IN!
IT'S JUST THAT, TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH
I'M NOT GOOD WITH THE POLICE...
DON'T LIE TO US!
IKUTAROU-SA-
WE WON'T SHOW YOU ANY MERCY IF YOU MAKE FUN OF US ADULTS!
WHAAA-!

Letting yourself become infatuated with such ridiculous things!
And you call yourself a warrior?!
You spineless coward!
Apprentice Policeman Toujuurou
That gentleman... is named Toujuurou and he is a new policeman that joined the guard house here.
He is apparently a young master of a low-ranking vassal family, however
He is always being scolded for being inept.
Something like this should just be-!

GO AND COOL YOUR HEAD!
ピシャーン
HUH?
THIS IS-
よろ…
よろ…
ぱしっ
UM, THAT'S A NEKOMATA MADE BY TORIYAMA SEKIEN, RIGHT?
THAT WAS THE FIRST THING THAT FIGURE MAKER MADE IN HIS AYAKASHI SERIES THEY SELL AT THAT HABERDASHERY ON THE NIHON BRIDGE!!
ぴく…
YEAH, WHAT ABOUT IT?


I GOT IN LINE
ぱァ！
THE NIGHT BEFORE
THERE WERE ONLY FIFTY MADE AND THEY ALL SOLD IN A FLASH!
IT'S AMAZING THAT YOU WERE ABLE TO GET ONE OF THOSE!

I COLLECT OTHER THINGS THAT I RISK MY LIFE TO COMPLETE THE SERIES OF BUT THERE ARE TIMES I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO BECAUSE THEY COME OUT WITH A NEW SERIES JUST AS I FINISH COLLECTING ANOTHER.
YOU REALLY KNOW YOUR STUFF! I CAN STILL FEEL THE COLD FROM THAT NIGHT.
IF I REMEMBER RIGHT, IT SNOWED REALLY HARD THAT NIGHT, RIGHT? THAT WAS THE NIGHT THE OWNER GAVE OUT AMAZAKE!


WHO WOULD HAVE THOUGHT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN THAT INCIDENT IN THE SPRING ...
AND YET...
WHETHER IT BE THIS CRAFTSMANSHIP OR HOW IT FITS IN YOUR HAND
IT JUST MAKES YOU THINK THE FIGURE MAKER REALLY KNOWS US OTAKUS WELL, HUH!!

I'M ALSO A LITTLE INTERESTED IN THEM ...
AH... YEAH
FOR THAT MATTER, WH...
WHY DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SUCH THINGS? MIGHT YOU BE A FELLOW COLLECTOR AS WELL-DEGOZARU ??!
GOZARU!?
ALL RIGHT!! I-I AM ALSO HAVE SUGOROKU'S KARUTA CARDS AND ARITHMETIC MANIA...
NANI-?
EEH
WHAT ARE YOU...
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING ALL EXCITED FOR?
OTAKUS?
COMPLETED?
I DON'T UNDERSTAND THAT ALL YOU KNOW?
THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO GET EXCITED YOU KNOW ?!
SO SORRY...

スイッ
PRETTY MUCH
DIDN'T HE ALSO GAMBLE AND GET INTO FIGHTS INVOLVING WOMEN, TOO?

HMMM... ICE, HUH
WELL, IT IS TRUE THAT TOWAZOU WAS A BAD DRUNK WHO ALWAYS CAUSED US POLICEMEN TROUBLE...

ちら…
WE JUST DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO DO...
IS IT REALLY ALL RIGHT FOR US TO TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT THIS?

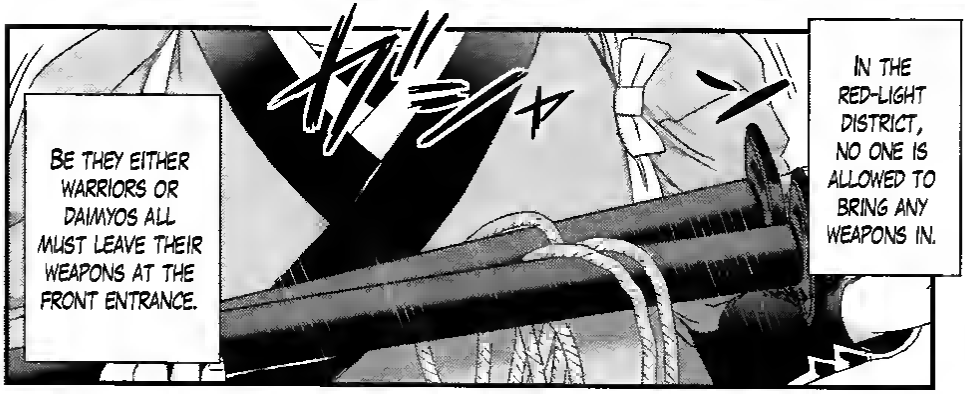
きゅっ…

I'M SURE HOURAI-SAN COULDN'T STOMACH ALL THAT HE DID.

WE HAVE TO DO SOMETHING QUICK... BUT

I'LL SPEAK WITH THE YORIKI* AT THE MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE MY FATHER IS ALSO ON SPEAKING TERMS WITH THEM..
I'M SO HAPPY! THANKS SO MUCH!
ぽり…
ぷぅん
ズキュン
I DID IT
ニヤリ…
EEEEK! IT'S JUST WHAT YOU'D EXPECT FROM A FUTURE OIRAN. IS THIS WHAT THEY CALL THE ART OF COAXING?
TALK ABOUT SCARY!
ふわっ
WITH THIS... WE WILL EXCUSE OURSELVES
I AM SURE THAT MUST HAVE HURT... HERE, USE THIS HAND TOWEL TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF...
KAIKAROU... UKI...HA...
開花楼
浮き葉

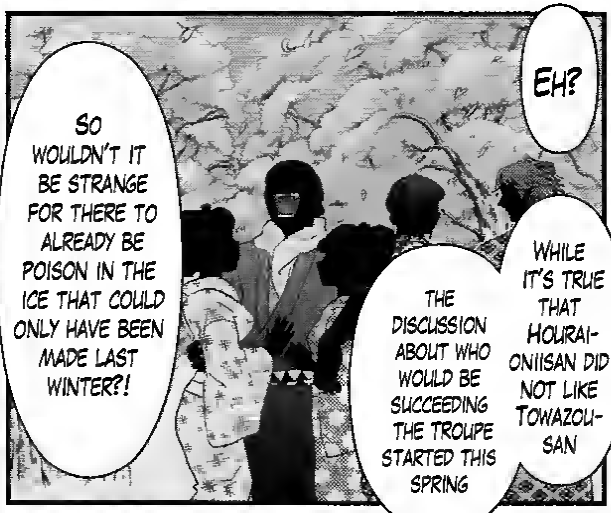
RIGHT
WELCOME
WE WILL TAKE YOUR WEAPONS HERE.

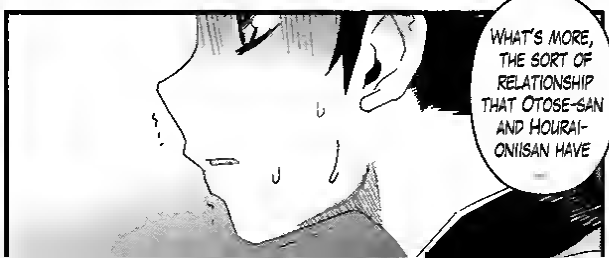

BE THEY EITHER WARRIORS OR DAIMYOS ALL MUST LEAVE THEIR WEAPONS AT THE FRONT ENTRANCE.
IN THE RED-LIGHT DISTRICT, NO ONE IS ALLOWED TO BRING ANY WEAPONS IN.

IKUTAROU-KUN!
REAL SWORDS ARE... HEAVY, HUH
WHOA...

I SEE, SO TOUJUUROU TALKED WITH THEM, HUH.
THE POLICE DID?
PLEASE LISTEN, RYUUNOSUKE-SAN
I USED MY SUPER REASONING SKILLS TO LEAD ME TO THE TRUTH THAT-
WHAT IS IT, RYUUNOSUKE-SAN?!
IT'S TERRIBLE!
THE POLICE JUST CAME AND TOOK AWAY HOURAI-ONIISAN AND OTOSE-SAN
ON THE SUSPICION OF HAVING KILLED TOWAZOU-SAN!!
I'M STILL WORKING ...
AH, HEY!
THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT! JUST COME WITH ME AND EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON!
SO BASICALLY ...

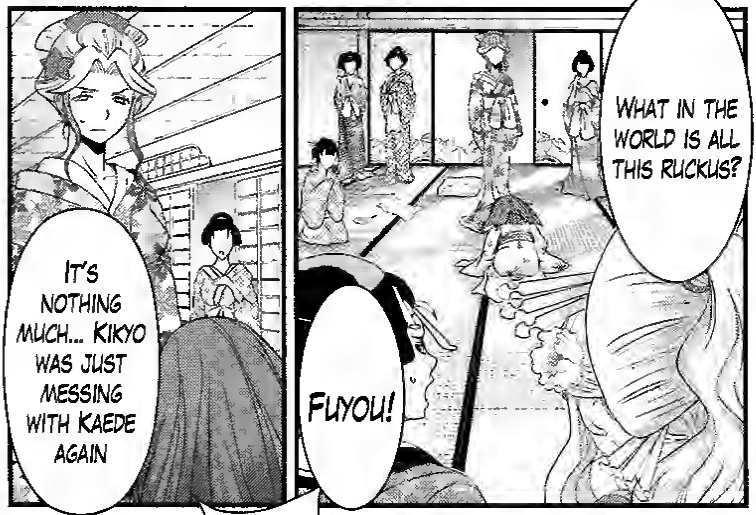
I figured that those two would have been able to commit the crime...
Ikutarou-kun...
Hourai-san is no murederer!
Just what you have done?!

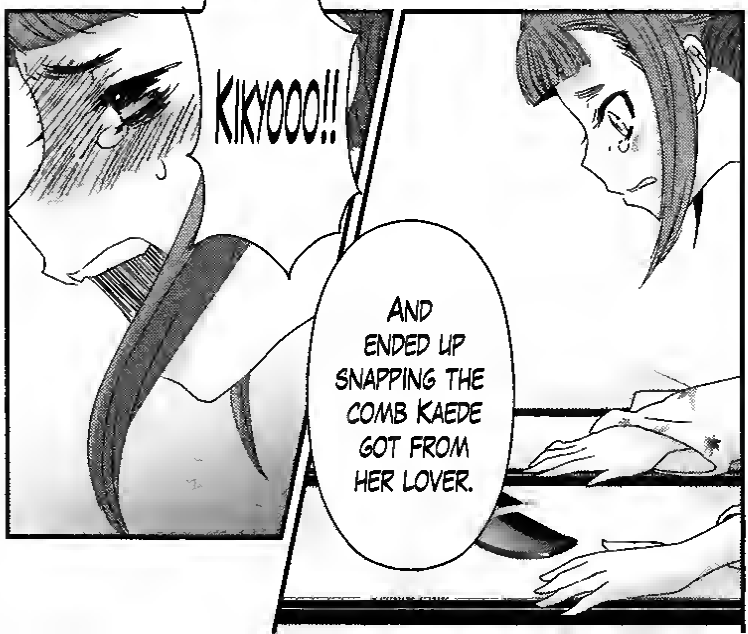

Eh?
While it's true that Hourai-oniisan did not like Towazou-san
The discussion about who would be succeeding the troupe started this spring
So wouldn't it be strange for there to already be poison in the ice that could only have been made last winter?!

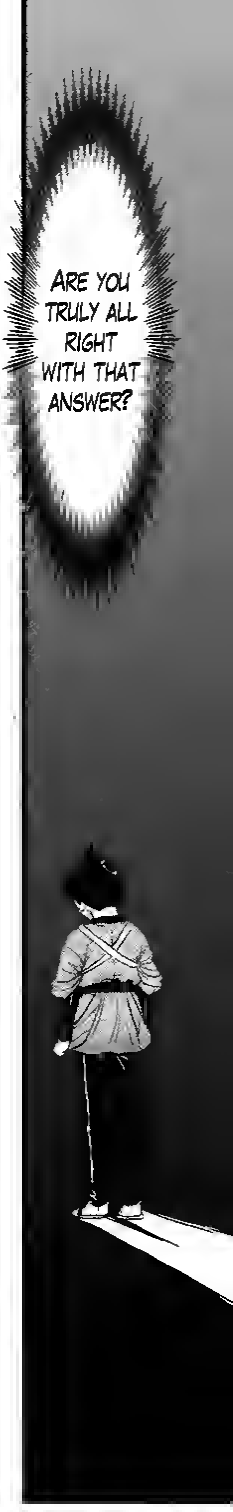

What's more, the sort of relationship that Otose-san and Hourai-oniisan have...

Wouldn't you say it's more like a relationship between women or sisters
than of a man and woman in love?

In the world of acting, one's reputation is of the utmost importance.
There have even been instances where even the slightest rumor or "lie" could end an actor's career.
A "lie"?
It wasn't a lie! I just reported what I saw to clear your name-
I wanted to know who the "true murderer" was!
If you were just going to "lie" and frame someone who was innocent then I would have preferred remaining a suspect!!

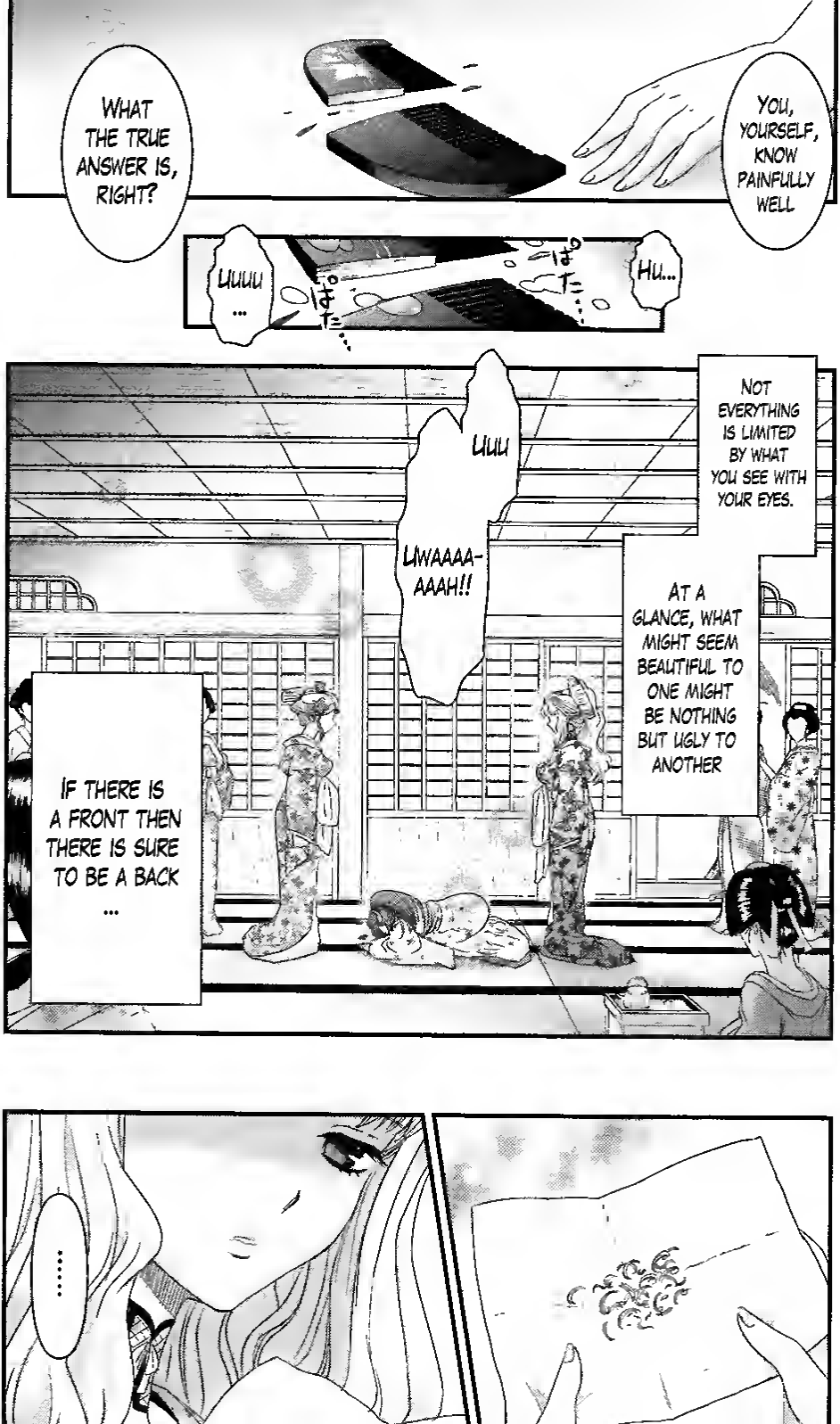

IT'S NOTHING MUCH... KIKYO WAS JUST MESSING WITH KAEDE AGAIN
FUYOU!
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS ALL THIS RUCKUS?


KIKYOOO!!
AND ENDED UP SNAPPING THE COMB KAEDE GOT FROM HER LOVER.


ARE YOU TRULY ALL RIGHT WITH THAT ANSWER?

DID YOU DO THAT BECAUSE YOU WERE JEALOUS THAT I HAD SOMEONE ?!
OR DO YOU HATE ME THAT MUCH?!
YEAH, I HATE YOU
HAVING YOU GO ON AND ON ABOUT THAT LOVER OF YOURS
AND SEEING YOU CLING TO HIS MEMORY LIKE THAT MADE ME WANT TO PUKE!!
OH, HONESTLY! THAT'S ENOUGH, YOU TWO!
.....
KAEDE-SAN, HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN...
SINCE YOU LAST SAW YOUR LOVER?
HUH?

THAT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!
IT'S NOT LIKE AN OIRAN LIKE YOU WOULD UNDERSTAND!
THAT MAN
SAVED ME IN MORE WAYS THAN I CAN COUNT ...
IT TRULY IS A BEAUTIFUL COMB
?
HOWEVER, BETWEEN THAT DELICATE AND BEAUTIFUL COMB
OR KIKYO'S HARSH WORDS ...
WHICH DO YOU THINK... TRULY PROTECTS A WOMAN LIVING IN YOSHIWARA ?


WHAT THE TRUE ANSWER IS, RIGHT?
YOU, YOURSELF, KNOW PAINFULLY WELL
UUUU ...
HU...
NOT EVERYTHING IS LIMITED BY WHAT YOU SEE WITH YOUR EYES.
UUU
UWAAAA-AAAH!!
AT A GLANCE, WHAT MIGHT SEEM BEAUTIFUL TO ONE MIGHT BE NOTHING BUT UGLY TO ANOTHER
IF THERE IS A FRONT THEN THERE IS SURE TO BE A BACK ...
.....

KOROKU, IS THAT YOU, KOROKU?!
WHERE ARE YOU GOING LOOKING SO PALE?

TO THE GUARD HOUSE ...
FORGIVE ME, I HAD KEPT SOMETHING FROM YOU...
SO NOW I AM GOING TO TELL THEM THE "TRUTH" BEHIND TOWAZOU-SAN'S DEATH.

!
THE TRUTH BEHIND HIS DEATH?!

DEUS EX SCANS

OSHIGERINANSHI

CHAPTER 04
VOLUME 1

TRANSLATOR
GOTTERSTECHEN007

CLEANER REDRAWER
NJMANGA

PROOF-
GOTTERSTECHEN007

TYPESETTING
NJMANGA

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